UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General approves staffing increase in office of Special Representative for Burundi; human rights presence in country to be reinforced.

+ Secretary-General establishes fund to support international police monitoring programme and creation of adequate police force in Haiti; appeals to Member States for contributions.

+ Central African security is categorical imperative, Secretary-General says in message to ministerial meeting in Congo.

+ Commission on Status of Women sets up informal working group to review accreditation of certain non-governmental organizations to 1995 World Conference on Women.

+ Major-General Stanislaw Wozniak of Poland appointed as new Force Commander of UNIFIL.

+ United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish to hold fourth session from 27 March to 12 April.

+ New Zealand reports to Human Rights Committee on settlement of Maori claims under 1840 Treaty.

+ DPI issues Guide to Information at United Nations; publishes Blue Book on United Nations and El Salvador.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has approved a small increase in the size of the office of his Special Representative for Burundi, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, using discretionary funds, according to a United Nations spokesman. The number of professional staff will be increased from three to four, while the number of internationally recruited general service staff will be increased from two to four. Seven more staff members will be recruited locally, bringing the number of local staff to 16.

Meanwhile, the number of United Nations human rights staff in Burundi will be increased sharply from 2 to as many as 35. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, will be in the country from 29 to 31 March to discuss the actions of the Human Rights Commission in the context of the programme of advisory services and technical assistance.

The spokesman went on to say that those measures reflected the seriousness with which the United Nations viewed the situation in Burundi.

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The Secretary-General has established a voluntary fund to support the international police monitoring programme in Haiti, and to assist with the creation of an adequate police force there. He appealed to all Member States to give immediate and serious consideration to contributing to the fund. He took that action in response to Security Council resolution 975 (1995).

A United Nations spokesman said the security situation in Haiti had improved greatly, but remained fragile. Effective policing and related institution-building efforts were needed to sustain a secure and stable environment for the consolidation of democracy.

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The security of central Africa is a categorical imperative, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a message to the sixth ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, he said peace and security were prerequisites for sustainable development in the region. The meeting took place this week in Brazzaville, Congo.

Africans must draw on their own resources, their ancient civilization, their deeply rooted culture and their ancestral wisdom to take charge of their collective destiny, the Secretary-General said. They must improve measures designed to build confidence between States, including preventive diplomacy. He stressed the need for an African disarmament policy.

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The Commission on the Status of Women has set up an informal working group to review the question of accreditation to the upcoming Fourth World Conference on Women of non-governmental organizations that do not already have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The Commission, which is meeting at Headquarters through 4 April, is acting as the preparatory body for the Beijing Conference.

On 15 March, the Commission approved ad referendum a list of 1,326 non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Commission's session and to the Conference, in addition to those which already have consultative status. As a result of questions raised about five non-governmental organizations on the list, as well as non-governmental organizations which

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applied but were not included on the list, the Commission set up the working group to look into the question of accreditation.

The working group has reviewed the application of five non-governmental organizations to which reservations or objections were raised: the Catholics for a Free Choice based in Mexico, Uruguay, Brazil and the United States, and the Armenian Relief Society, based in the United States. The working group recommended their accreditation, which was then confirmed by the Commission.

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The Secretary-General has appointed Major-General Stanislaw Franciszek Wozniak of Poland as Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), with effect from 1 April. Major-General Wozniak is currently Director of the Military International Affairs Department at the Polish Ministry of National Defence. He will succeed Major-General Trond Furuhovde, who served as Force Commander of UNIFIL from 22 February 1993 to 22 February 1995.

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The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish will hold its fourth session at Headquarters from 27 March to 12 April. The Conference will aim to finalize a draft legal agreement for preventing international conflicts on the high seas. Under the draft negotiating text, countries will be legally bound to conserve and sustainably manage fish stocks and to peacefully settle any disputes arising over fishing on the high seas.

The urgency of the talks has been driven home by the increasing number of conflicts among national fishing fleets. Canada's recent seizure of a Spanish trawler in international waters off its Atlantic coast was the latest incident to draw attention to the problem.

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The recent historic settlement of fishing claims, which provided the Maori people with a major ownership in the New Zealand fishing industry, was a milestone in efforts to settle Maori claims under the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand has told the Human Rights Committee. The Treaty -- recognized as a founding document of the modern State of New Zealand -- was concluded by representatives of the British Crown and Maori Chiefs and Tribes.

Introducing its report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New Zealand said another major initiative was the announcement last December of policy proposals for resolving other Maori grievances under the Treaty. The proposals encompassed claims to land and natural resources, and looked to their settlement over the next decade.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) has issued a "Guide to Information at the United Nations". The Guide will facilitate public access to the vast array of information produced by the Organization, including publications, briefing papers, video footage and photographs, on virtually every aspect of international life.

The 122-page Guide provides information on subjects from air safety to children's rights, monetary systems to peace-building, and software engineering to waste management. It contains a succinct description of the principal agencies and departments in the United Nations system; their mandate, structure and programmes; the kind of information they produce; and where it can be obtained. The Guide also features a cross-referenced index, which links major United Nations concerns and activities to the principal agencies dealing with them.

The DPI has also announced the publication of "The United Nations and El Salvador, 1990-1995", the fourth volume of the "Blue Books" series. It details the Organization's involvement in the country as a negotiator and peace-keeper, and its role in last year's democratic elections. The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador will expire on 30 April.

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